

The Castle of Lies

BY ARTHUR HENRY VESSEY
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CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

To all purposes, I was a caged prisoner. The risk I had run to spy on them would be to no purpose unless I could surprise them at their night's work.

I gazed at my impotence. Then I thought of the window. Perhaps there was a balcony.

There was no blind at the window, but wooden shutters that fastened with a catch. I pushed open the French windows. Yes, there was the balcony, and to my joy I saw that it extended the length of the suite.

And now a new difficulty stared me in the face. At any moment they might enter the bedroom, and when I had gained the balcony, outside the salon, would shutters prevent my seeing within?

As to the first risk I must take it. The door had jammed before; it would jam again. The noise made in opening it would give me some warning.

I gained the balcony; there were shutters, but I could see readily through the interstices.

It was the apartment we had first entered; and it bore unmistakable signs of having been minutely ransacked. A large empire desk had been pried open. Papers had been abstracted from the drawers and pigeonholes; they lay about in confusion. In more than one place the carpet had been torn up at the edges.

As I peered cautiously within, Dr. Starva was lowering the Venetian blind of another window. Evidently they were searching the room with the knowledge that an article of value was hidden there.

I heard Madame de Varnier cry out excitedly. A packet, concealed between the slats of a Venetian blind, had fallen to the floor.

Without a doubt it was for this packet of papers that they had been searching. Madame de Varnier tore the envelope in feverish haste. She scanned the contents of the papers with intense eagerness. Dr. Starva looking over her shoulder. As they read, their faces expressed disappointment and chagrin. Dr. Starva questioned Madame de Varnier repeatedly. She put aside his fierce inquiries with impatience.

And now I made a second discovery. I thought I understood the meaning of this extraordinary plot in coming to the hotel at Vitznau. I had guessed long since that I bore a sufficiently striking resemblance to Sir Mortimer Brett to deceive at least the first casual glance. Otherwise, why the amazement of the Bretts and Madame de Varnier in first seeing me? How else could I explain the events of the night? They had drugged me, or attempted to do so, that I might be oblivious to inconvenient inquiries or greetings. The hat and cloak of Sir Mortimer, which Dr. Starva had procured in some manner, were unusual enough in character to be readily recognized by the servants of the hotel. Sir Mortimer was known to be ill, and my condition would arouse no suspicion.

All the facts as I swiftly reviewed them fitted neatly. The inference was unmistakable:

This was the suite of Sir Mortimer Brett. They had come for the packet of papers they were now reading. The presence of Sir Mortimer Brett with them had gained them ready admission to his rooms.

And now that they had found the papers?

Had I served my purpose? Was the invitation to Madame de Varnier's chateau a ruse cleverly planned simply to bring me to this hotel as Sir Mortimer?

In that case I must be alert that they did not slip through my hands, leading me here in Sir Mortimer's rooms to explain my predicament on the morrow as best I might.

Or was this the prelude to other adventures even more exciting? Was the game only just begun?

Still I watched them intently, while these perplexing questions demanded an answer. They had finished the papers now. Dr. Starva was seated in sullen gloom; Madame de Varnier glided to and fro in angry indecision.

A loud knock on the door opening into the hall startled me almost as much as themselves. Madame de Varnier thrust the papers into the bosom of her dress; then, while Dr. Starva at a sign from her answered the summons, she hastily restored the room to outward signs of order.

"What is it? Who is there?" Starva demanded in an agitated voice.

"It is Heurt, the concierge," replied the intruder.

"To-morrow, to-morrow."

"But there is an English gentleman who says that he must see his Excellency."

It would be difficult to say whether this startling request alarmed them more than it did myself. I listened breathless. Dr. Starva's presence of mind seemed to have quite deserted him. He drew a revolver from his pocket. Madame de Varnier made a contemptuous sign expressive of his folly. He thrust it into his coat again; renewed his expostulations to the concierge. But the man was persistent. At last, at a signal from Madame de Varnier, he was admitted to the room. The presence of Madame de Varnier startled him. For the first time she spoke.

"My dear man, be discreet. Behold me, a woman, and at this hour of the night in a gentleman's apartment. Is not that a reason that you exercise your discretion?"

It was cleverly done, her perturbation and distraction. She made her appeal dramatically, her hands clasped in her anxiety.

"Madam is mistaken if she thinks I am not discreet," protested the little

man. "If it were possible I would shield madam. But he stands without, in the hall, this stubborn Englishman. Madam can save her reputation only by retreating to the bedroom. Have no fear, I shall not betray madam."

It was time for me to beat a hasty retreat. But my curiosity still held me.

"Have I not told you," fiercely interrupted Dr. Starva, "that it is not his Excellency who is here with madam? It is a Mr. Haddon, and madam is his nurse and I am his physician. Tell this stubborn Englishman that, imbecile!"

"Monsieur will please be reasonable. I cannot help using my eyes."

"Use them yourself if you will," desperately replied Starva. "But at least you need not tell this Englishman the truth."

"It is impossible to deceive him," persisted the concierge. "All day he has been waiting for his Excellency. A quarter of an hour ago he was smoking in the garden below. He has seen the light shining through the shutters of his Excellency's apartment. He knows that it is the apartment of his Excellency."

"You can tell him that you have placed Mr. Haddon in these rooms for the night only," persuaded Dr. Starva, producing his pocketbook.

"No, monsieur," replied the concierge sorrowfully, his eyes on the notes held toward him, "it is impossible. He will tell the manager and I shall lose my place."

"Go to this Englishman," inter-

point of death he must none the less place these dispatches in his hands tonight."

"But as his Excellency's physician I forbid it," replied Dr. Starva, with determination.

"And," entreated the woman gliding to the door, "can you not make him understand how disagreeable it would be for me to be surprised in these rooms, and that it would annoy Sir Mortimer beyond measure?"

"It is useless, madam. Have I not told him that embarrassing circumstances make it impossible that his Excellency be officially recognized tonight?"

"And still he insists?" inquired Starva angrily.

"As only the stubborn English can insist. He is outside the door at this moment. He has sent me to you, not to ask permission, but to announce his coming. He refuses to go away until he has seen his Excellency. If the door is not opened in five minutes he will call the manager of the hotel."

"His name?"

"I am giving you his card."

"Captain Reginald Forbes," read Madame de Varnier. "Well, we will admit this Captain Forbes."

I listened to this dialogue with a trepidation that deprived me of power to think or act. That fatal indecision which, on certain occasions, had already brought its tragic penalty again seized me. The crisis impending might leave in its wake consequences too grave to be thought of—might leave me a man disgraced and liable to the extreme penalty of the law. And yet I lay still, in a nightmare of indecision and inaction. It was the same numbness of will that had paralyzed me on the Strallegg Pass. Heaven grant that the consequences now be not as disastrous!

I heard the click of a revolver. Then Captain Forbes was admitted to the salon.

"Where is Sir Mortimer Brett?" he demanded harshly. "I must see him without further delay. May I ask you are, sir?"

"The physician of his Excellency," replied Starva, bowing. He was no longer attempting to deny that I was Sir Mortimer Brett. "Sir Mortimer

He strode to my bedside. I could imagine with what breathless anxiety the adventurers watched him. Was he sufficiently intimate with Sir Mortimer Brett to denounce me instantly as an impostor?

"Your Excellency!" he said gently. "Your Excellency!"

The immediate danger of discovery was past. At least he had not detected the deception so far. He called me again; he shook my shoulder respectfully. I opened my eyes.

"What is it?" I demanded, bewildered. I am horrified to-day when I think of the facility that was mine in playing this game of intrigue. I looked languidly from Captain Forbes to Madame de Varnier, who had resumed her seat at the bedside. The question was addressed to her.

She took my hand. "This is Captain Forbes, a king's messenger. He has brought you dispatches of importance."

"Ah, yes," I said wearily, and looked at him with wild eyes.

"I am sorry to arouse you, sir." Contempt for the man struggled with respect for his office. "But my orders at the Foreign Office were to give you these papers at the earliest possible moment. The business is urgent. May I suggest that you read them at once?"

My eyes unconsciously turned to Madame de Varnier for guidance. She stroked my hand gently.

"Do you not see that he is in no condition to be disturbed to-night?" she asked indignantly.

For the first time Captain Forbes hesitated. He placed one unburned hand on his breast as if to guard jealously the dispatches he bore. That he should hesitate at all seemed to me incredible. But Captain Forbes seemed a fair example of that type of Englishman who performs his duty with the stubbornness and obstinacy of a fool as well as a hero. Chance often determines which of the two characters he shall assume. It is true he had not the remotest suspicion that I was not Sir Mortimer. But surely he must see that I was in the power of these adventurers.

All my fears reached a climax, when, looking steadily at me a moment, he turned to the others:

"I must speak to Sir Mortimer alone."

I saw Starva grasp the revolver concealed beneath his coat. Madame de Varnier silenced the protests on his lips with a meaning glance. She realized the uselessness of further resistance.

"You will not excite him more than necessary," she entreated anxiously. "And you must not be surprised to find his mind still confused as a result of the opiate given him."

"I shall spare him as far as possible," Forbes replied with some sternness. Drawing himself erect, his arms folded, he waited until the door had closed behind them.

My first impulse was to put an end to this farce. But again I hesitated. They were listening outside that door; every suspicion was alert; the slightest cause would fan the suspicion to a flame.

And then what? I should have made myself ridiculous to no purpose. I had gone far in my reckless venture—too far to risk all by attempting to warn Captain Forbes at this crucial moment. His brain worked too slowly—he was too deficient in imagination—too much lacking in subtlety and finesse. I refused—recklessly, if you will, but deliberately—to risk the success of my scheme by drumming into the dull brain of Captain Forbes the true state of affairs. It would have taken him a good quarter of an hour to grasp merely the facts. At that time he would understand just enough of them to be stubbornly convinced that I was equally involved with the other two, but he would think my nerve had failed me and that I was attempting to purchase my own freedom from punishment at the expense of the others. And certainly they would drag me down with them, if for no other purpose than revenge. No; this was not the hour for confidences; Captain Forbes was not the man to be made a confidant at such an hour.

He looked down at me with cold respect. Outwardly I met his steady look with something of fortitude and composure, but beneath the clothes my two hands were clenched rigid.

From a silk bag suspended about his neck he produced two envelopes. He weighed them in his hand a moment; then he placed the bulkier of the two in its silk case. The other he held toward me.

"The Foreign Office, sir, has intrusted to me two dispatches. My orders are to place them in your hands at the earliest opportunity. But one of these dispatches I know to be of great importance. I shall therefore keep it for the present, unless you demand it."

"No, no," I muttered hoarsely, "I cannot receive it now."

"Then to-morrow, sir, I shall hope to find you in better health. Then I shall give you the second dispatch. This I leave with you now, and may I suggest that you read it at your earliest convenience?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Royal Newlyweds and Their Baby

How the Lavish Display of Love and Admiration Which the Lusty Young Heir to the Throne of Spain Is Receiving from His Adoring Parents Shows That They Are Just the Same as Every Other "Newlywed" Couple After All.

The Newlyweds' baby has been discovered in real life. He is no fragment of George Washington's imagination, no creation of the comic artist, but a real, breathing, "Da-da-ing" infant, the pride and ruler of the household.

And his parents? Why, Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed, of course. Their actual names? Well, Mr. Newlywed's real name is Alfonso, and his pretty little wife is called Victoria. The baby's name is Alfonso Pio Cristiano Eduardo Francisco Guillermo Carlos Enrique Fernando Antonio. And he is the prince of the Asturias, heir apparent to the throne of Spain!

All the world loves a lover, and all the world laughs at the pretty pranks of a young couple with their first baby. They do such ridiculous things, they talk such foolish baby talk, and seem so oblivious of what others may think of them. Every one recognizes the Newlyweds as drawn by McManus in *The World*, and that is the reason of their great success as a comic feature. But, although it is generally known that their prototypes must exist in real life, it was hardly to be expected that so dignified a couple as the king and queen of Spain would furnish so notable an example. Yet the papers are ringing with stories of their antics as proud, silly parents, and if ever there were a Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed they are the ones.

Not only all Madrid, which has the honor of being the nursery of the young prince, but all the world is interested in the daily events in the palace where this scion of royalty is being nurtured through his early infancy, says the *New York World*.

Curiosity is Universal.

"What is he doing? How is he today? Has he a good nurse? Can he put his toe in his mouth yet?" These are daily questions encountered at the Madrid bridge parties and in the shopping hour. Curiosity is fed by a plethora of details which are allowed to creep out of the palace without much restraint. The populace and the royal family seem nearer together than ever before. It is all the work of that baby.

From all that can be learned, the young king and his bride are a most human pair. The king is just a father, proud of his baby, and taking more interest in him than a parent usually shows. For instance, we learn that the other day he went in the nursery and happened to see some picture-books that had been given to the baby. The young prince is hardly old enough yet to enjoy picture-books, but people don't think of those things when they get presents for a baby. So the picture-books were there.

The king picked one up and glanced through it, one eye fixed admiringly on the prince, who was trying to put his fist in his royal eye. The king gave a little exclamation as he turned the pages.

"Why," said he, "this is not good meat on which to feed a prince of Spain. Listen to this." Thereupon he read aloud to the queen:

"Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle. The cow jumped over the moon. The little dog laughed to see such sports

And the dish ran away with the spoon."

"And the pictures!" he exclaimed. "They are not the things I wish my son to be brought up on. No, throw them away and let the little darling have picture-books filled with Spanish soldiers so that he can see bright uniforms and have his little heart filled with thoughts of war and glory. What says the little precious?"

And the royal stripping assented, saying "Da-da! da-da-da!"

Affairs of State Forgotten.

It is said that the king is neglecting affairs of state on account of the baby, and at times when he should be sitting in council can be found playing on the nursery floor with his little son. The other day there was a hue and cry. The king's scepter could not be found, and it was wanted at once. They found it in the nursery, the prince of the Asturias had it. Did they take it away? Not the king told all the councillors about it, and declared that it was the cutest thing that the little rascal had yet done.

The young king's assumption of the role of Mr. Newlywed took place on the day of the baby's birth, when, we read, he appeared before the waiting party of nobles with the little shaver on a silver tray, his majesty's face wearing an expression of "smiling pride and fatherly joy." The king was gone, and the tickled daddy had taken his place. Since then the papers have been filled with stories showing how closely the royal parent resembles the amusing creation of Mr. McManus.

First of all, the king showed great concern over possible kidnapping of his young son. So did Mr. Newlywed, as will be remembered, and once when he thought the baby had been stolen, he made the town hideous with his moans. Alfonso had guards placed all about the palace, and none could come or go without having every bundle searched to see if it might contain the little prince.

Good Omen at Christening.

At the christening, when the baby was laden with the handicap of names that it must carry through life, the infant, held in the king's arms, cried as the water was placed on its forehead.

stories of the exploits of the prince.

Nurse's Gorgeous Uniform.

According to reports, the nurse is a "splendid brunette of 23. She wears a uniform of red velvet trimmed with gold braid, a necklace of small gold cubes, earrings to match, a large silk handkerchief covering the hair, white silk stockings and low patent-leather shoes with silver buckles."

The king, it is said, has started a "Baby Book." In this little volume, bound in white parchment and embellished with gold mountings, he and the queen keep a daily account of the baby. His weight, the color of his eyes, his way of smiling—everything is set down carefully, and when the first tooth is cut and the first word pronounced they will be given a place on the pages.

Like All Other Babies.

No doubt the price of the Asturias is just like all other babies. The fact that there is still fear around the palace that he may be kidnaped and a changeling put in his place proves that the royal parents are afraid that they couldn't tell him from one of their infant peasant subjects. If he looks like other babies, then he undoubtedly behaves like them. He will, of course, go through the period of teething, and probably will not hesitate to howl his royal head off when he becomes mixed up with the colic.



The Magnificent Cradle in Which the Royal Baby, Alfonso Pio Cristiano Eduardo Francisco Guillermo Carlos Enrique Fernando Antonio, Prince of the Asturias, Takes His Afternoon Naps.

On such occasions the king will, of course, walk the floor with him at night, while the queen heats the paragon.

The prince of the Asturias will soon reach the "bright saying" age. When that shall have come they will be parlor times for the Spanish grandees. When the king comes into the council chamber with a smile on his face, some day, they will be able to tell by all the signs that he is just about to spring "the very latest thing the little fellow has just said." Then they will have to listen while he tells them all about it. There will be no escape, any more than there is from the average proud father who retails the remarks of his young hopeful to a bored crowd on a street corner.

His First Achievement.

There will be fun about the palace when the prince of the Asturias first creeps over to a table and pulls himself up on his wobbly legs by means of the table cloth. Then can you imagine the excitement on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed? The entire entourage of courtiers will be brought in to see the wonderful happening, and, of course, the court photographer will be called to take a picture of his royal highness standing up. Uniforms will be ordered for him, for then he will have become old enough to be a general in the army (ex parte) and troops will be reviewed for him.

Nothing in these accounts of the family life of the king and queen will astonish young parents who read them. But it is surprising that royalty can so far forget itself as to act like ordinary humanity. The fact of the matter must be that King Alfonso and Queen Victoria are a very loving, lovable pair, filled with human nature, democratic and good-natured. The baby, then, must inherit these good traits, and his development will be watched a good deal more joyfully by the world than if his daily doings were hedged about with mystery. Doubtless, before long the king and queen and the royal stripping will have furnished the Newlywed artist with some good material for comic pictures.



One of the Costly Lace Dresses Provided for Baby Alfonso.

Mr. Newlywed—that is, King Alfonso—smiled so widely that the assembled multitude burst into cheers.

"It's good luck," said he to the queen, who stood by him; "the little darling cries. That means good fortune." And the baby said, "Da-da-da-da-da!"

Mrs. Newlywed, Queen Victoria, wanted to nurse the baby herself. This shocked the natives. No queen of Spain had ever done such a thing before. But this queen insisted. "I wouldn't have anyone else nursing my little precious," she said. But at length it was found impracticable, and a wet nurse was brought in from the peasant districts. The queen inspected the candidates for this important post herself, and the final selection was made by her. While Mr. Newlywed, down in the parlor, told a select gathering of grandees some new



"Your Excellency!" He Said Gently. "Your Excellency!"

rupted Madame de Varnier; "demand his business. Say that his Excellency is ill, very ill. There have been days that he has not slept. His physician and his nurse have grave fears for his life if he is aroused. To awaken him is perhaps to bring on again a crisis of the nerves. But as soon as he awakes we will summon the Englishman."

"I go," the servant assented reluctantly. "But it will be useless."

I dared not await the result of my errand. I returned deliberately to my bed, deliberately, so that I might not lose my breath. I was in a terrible predicament. To rescue myself from it I must make known my true identity without an instant's delay. The knowledge that I certainly should not be believed made me hesitate. No; I had gone too far to retreat now. If my stratagem proved absolutely desperate and a confession was inevitable, I should be believed as readily later as now. In the meantime chance might favor me; and my ruse be not wholly in vain.

is seriously ill. I refuse to permit him to be disturbed. I have brought him here to Vitznau, hoping that the old surroundings may induce him to sleep. It is a nervous disorder that has prostrated Sir Mortimer. He has suffered terribly from insomnia. There are moments when he is delirious. To bring him sleep it was necessary to give him an opiate, you understand. If he is awakened he may be sane or he may deny his very identity."

"Which is his room?"

"Captain Forbes, I forbid it. It is impossible. I warn you—"

Madame de Varnier opened the door of the bedroom quietly.

"If the gentleman insists on awakening Sir Mortimer we are powerless," she said gently. "But at least let him not be excited more than necessary."

"I shall endeavor to follow your instructions, madam," said Forbes stiffly.

CHAPTER XIV.

The King's Messenger.

A minute passed and the bedroom door was again opened. Madame de Varnier and Dr. Starva conversed in hurried whispers, the electric light shining full on my face. I moved about restlessly, but did not open my eyes. Presently the woman seated herself at my bedside. Dr. Starva left the room, the door being slightly ajar.

I could not resist the temptation to half open my eyes. Madame de Varnier was praying fervently, regarding with passionate adoration a jeweled cross held before her eyes. A peremptory knock at the door of the drawing-room opening on the corridor put an abrupt end to these devotions, which seemed to me so incongruous. She clasped her hands; she listened, rigid with anxiety. It may be imagined that I myself listened, scarcely less anxiously. It was the concierge again.

"Here is the Englishman's card. He says he is a king's messenger. He brings important dispatches. He insists that were his Excellency at the



Denounced Boon to Mankind

Seventeenth Century Wives saw No Good in Spectacles.

A certain English vicar made himself notorious by the vigor with which in the seventeenth century, he inveighed against the use of the newly invented optic glasses, since they perverted vision and made all things appear in an unnatural and therefore a false light. Microscopes and telescopes, with their array of lenses, he declared to be impostors, since a man could not see so well with two pairs of spectacles as with one. Some asserted it to be sinful to assist the eyes, which were adapted by Providence to the capacity of the individual, whether good or indifferent. It was argued that society at large would

become demoralized by the use of spectacles; they would give one man an unfair advantage over his fellow, and every man an unfair advantage over every woman, who could not be expected on aesthetic and intellectual grounds to adopt the practice.

Outspoken.

A representative from a southwest, ern state was not long ago lamenting to a colleague that his memory was getting poorer each year.

"Things that I hear go in at one ear and out at the other," he said.

"That's bad," said the colleague, with a broad smile; "but you'd better be thankful that your case is not as bad as that of Blank of Indiana. Things go in at his ear and come out of his mouth."—Harper's Weekly.

72-DAY POKER GAME.

Ship was Icebound, but the Whisky Supply Was Unlimited.

Old "Judge" Cooley, who never gets weary of talking to his many friends of the early period of his life when he was an officer in the American merchant marine service, talked to a few visitors who called on him at his quarters in one of the leading downtown hotels recently, of the time when he, with the other officers of the craft he belonged to, played poker day and night for about three months, or to be accurate, as the urbane and handsome "judge" declares, "for just exactly 72 days."

"This," said the retired sailor man, "was in the winter of 1883, and a very cold winter it was. I was then attached to the good old ship Simpson Hornor. She was a fine old craft, and her duty was that of towing coal barges from Louisville to New Orleans. My rank aboard the ship was that of assistant watchman, and my special

function was that of keeping the lamps trimmed. On the north-bound trip in the winter I am talking about we got stalled in the ice just about the vicinity of Paducah, Ky., and we couldn't get out.

"So the only thing we could do," said the old gentleman, "was to make the time pass as pleasantly as possible, and to do that we resorted to the great American game of poker. We were in no danger of starvation, as when we left New Orleans we had eight dressed hogs, a whole barrel of New Orleans molasses, plenty of flour and a whole lot of coffee.

"We had a number of visitors that winter, principally young farmers, who made a trip over the ice almost every night to take a hand in our social life of the poker game. Where we were stalled up was just abreast a little island near the mouth of the Tennessee river. Some of our former visitors were on the inside concerning the way of getting all the moonshine whisky we wanted so you see we didn't suffer a bit for that particular necessity of life.

"No, sir," said the judge, "we didn't have any bickerings of any account, not half as many as I hear these fashionable ladies have when they get together and play bridge whist."

"Some of the chips these fellows put up would make a cow smile," said the old towboat man. "Sometimes, when a fellow didn't have much cash, he set up a chicken or a duck, or a baryard duck, valued at the market price, and used the merchandise as chips. I won a pig once. It was a lucky night for me, and everybody was out of the game excepting one young fellow. I raised him eight dollars, and as he didn't have the cash, he proposed that he would shoot me if I would accept a good-sized coal of the value of eight dollars. Of course his word was good, but I won out. The next morning at nine o'clock the young fellow was there with the pork."

"I tell you they were good old times that winter when the gay old Simpson Hornor got stalled in the ice and the crew, from captain to cabin boy, passed their imprisonment playing poker."—Washington Post.